The Sunday School Times

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My Desire

By Edith M. Gunderson

KEEP Thou my heart!
For all too quickly does it go astray
From seeking but *Thy* good and perfect way.
So, Lord, that from Thy love I'll ne'er depart—
Keep Thou my heart!

Keep Thou my mind!
Too often thoughts of vanity, of sin,
Besiege its citadel and batter in.
So, Lord, my wandering intellect now bind—
Keep Thou my mind!

Keep Thou my will!
Too readily it slips from Thy control,
And, in its foolish blindness, guides my soul.
So, Lord, that at Thy feet I may be still—
Keep Thou my will!

Keep Thou my all!
My wav'ring mind and heart and will unite,
That I may see and love and do the right!
O Lord, that *never* I may slip or fall—
Keep* Thou my *all!

Independence or Liberty?

To be independent is not necessarily to be free. The root of all sin is man's rebellion against God's commandments, his determination to do as he pleases and not as God wills. Men think they are free when they have their own way, but they are in bondage to self, sin, and Satan. Only those who surrender themselves to God can know real liberty. A happy illustration of this truth came out of a recent trip taken by William H. Richie, executive secretary of the American Scripture Gift Mission, through three of the islands of the West Indies. This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Puerto Rican independence, when the island was set free from Spain by the United States; and also the jubilee of evangelical missions in that island. Mr. Richie's tour coincided with President Truman's visit to the island, and while waiting beside the highway to see the President pass by, Mr. Richie asked a Puerto Rican minister whether he and his compatriots were interested in being independent of the United States Government. "No," said the minister. "We're not interested in independence; we are interested in our liberties. We have more liberty under the United States." His remark illustrates the fine but real distinction between independence and liberty. It is the Devil's work to keep men in bondage to himself and to themselves, without letting them realize that they are bound; but it is a sore and heavy slavery, bringing nothing but disillusionment, dissatisfaction, a haunting fear, and spiritual death. But all those who are redeemed by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and who walk in the Spirit are truly free. They are the ones of whom it is written: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. . . . For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:2, 15); "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1:13); "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1).

"This Atomic Age and the Word of God"

This editorial reviews the new book of the same title by Wilbur M. Smith, D.D., Professor of Apologetics at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, Calif. (W. A. Wilde Co., Boston 16; $3.)

NEARLY three years have passed since the three atomic explosions at Los Alamos, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki ushered in a new era. It is certainly not a golden age, for the power that the atomic bomb has placed in man's hands is awe-inspiring, and perplexity and fear are more widespread than ever. But the passing of these years in comparative peace may have lulled some into thinking that after all the atomic bomb is not so terrible as it was supposed to be, and that the world will somehow muddle along just as it used to before the war.

Dr. Smith's new book should arouse the most phlegmatic and conservative reader. This is not because he sets dates for the fulfillment of Bible prophecies, or gives fantastic interpretations of crucial passages of Scripture; but rather because of the great mass of facts he has gathered from authoritative sources on the latest developments in atomic physics, and the sober and scholarly commentaries on important passages which he has drawn from the whole of Christian literature, from the Church Fathers to our present day. Just as this book is ten times larger than the pamphlet he published on the subject in November, 1945, so his work has increased tenfold in importance, because

Comfort for Dark Days

"Be not afraid . . . remember the Lord" (Neh. 4:14).

of the vast amount of research he has obviously done in this field. The booklet had a circulation of 50,000 copies. It would be a good thing for this country if the circulation of the book might increase in the same proportion as its size.

As a real scholar, who has perhaps the best and largest personal library of Christian literature in the country,[1] Dr. Smith knows that his book will have to meet the critical scrutiny not only of Bible scholars who have devoted years to the study of prophecy, but also of scientific men and military experts who are thoroughly familiar with the principles and application of atomic physics both in peace and war. It should therefore be said in fairness to Dr. Smith that, with his customary thoroughness and capacity for painstaking research, he supports his own cautious statements on Bible prophecy with extensive quotations from masterly theologians and commentators of several centuries and countries, and explains atomic fission and its possibilities by quoting from outstanding authorities whose names are now well known to every intelligent person. If anyone is inclined to ask skeptically, "What does Dr. Smith know about the atomic bomb?" let him reserve judgment until he has read this amazing book.

After a ten-page introduction, Dr. Smith opens his book with a chapter on "This Atomic Age," giving some of the lurid high lights of the strange days in which we are living. From Dr. J. R. Oppenheimer, Professor of Physics at the University of California and formerly in charge of the Los Alamos laboratory, he quotes the following: "The interior of an exploding fission bomb is, so far as we know, a place without parallel elsewhere. It is hotter than the center of the sun. . . . The pressures are a thousand billion times atmospheric pressure. In the crudest, simplest sense, it is quite true that in atomic weapons man has created novelty." Winston Churchill said: "This revelation of the secrets of nature, long mercifully withheld from man, should arouse the most solemn reflections in the mind and conscience of every human being capable of comprehension." Dr. John Simpson said: "The advance embodied in the atomic bomb goes far beyond the discoveries of gunpowder, dynamite, poison gas, or radar. Atomic energy goes far beyond the realm of burning coal and falling water and exploding dynamite; it lies in the realm of the forces which power the sun. These forces are now in the hands of men and, unless men can control them, the end of our civilization may not be far distant." Dr. Langmuir, researcher in physics and chemistry for the General Electric Company, speaking of atomic bombs as weapons used against us said, "Forty million people might be wiped out in the United States by an attack of that kind."

In the second chapter Dr. Smith traces the use of Biblical phrases in the articles and addresses of public men who have recently written and spoken on this subject. He devotes several chapters to the history of the study of atoms, which began even among the Greek philosophers, and upon which a flood of light has been thrown in this present century. In "The Structure of Atoms and the Meaning of Nuclear Fission" he gives those astronomical figures with which we have become familiar, but which stagger the mind and are hard to translate into words. Take these statements, for instance: "The atoms are so small that one gram of gold — i.e., 2.2 pounds — one gram of gold will contain 3,000,000,000,000,000,000 atoms. If 100,000,000 silver atoms were placed adjacent to one another they would form a line only one inch in length. . . . Dr. Meitner says that the nucleus is to the atom in size what a grain of sand would be to the interior space of the Cathedral of St. Stephens in Vienna. Others express it in this way, that the ratio in size of an orange placed in the center of this earthly globe on which we live is approximately the ratio in size of the nucleus to the entire atom." There are facts and figures in this chapter that give new evidence of the wisdom and power of God, and make a believer cry out with the Psalmist, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Psa. 8:4.)

As the atomic bombs in 1945 echoed around the world, people began to wonder just what relation they might have to the prophecies in the third chapter of Peter's Second Letter, where he declares that "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (v. 10). Here in two chapters, covering nearly forty pages, the reader will find what is probably the most exhaustive discussion of this passage that has been written in recent years. The value of Dr. Smith's wide knowledge of Christian literature is here seen to good advantage, as he cites the best commentaries of several centuries.

There is a short chapter on the meanings of the words *ouranos*, which in Greek literature meant "the vault or firmament of heaven, the sky"; and *Uranus*, which was, in Greek mythology, the name of the god of Heaven, and which has been given to the seventh major planet discovered by Sir William Herschel in 1781. In the same chapter Dr. Smith traces the history of uranium, the now well-known element, and locates the principal deposits of pitchblende, in which uranium is found. He says, "The words ouranos, uranus, and uranium are related philogically, but they are in no way related in their respective meanings."

Two important chapters set forth the views of a great many statesmen, scientists, and university professors on the need for a united world and a world dictator. The author gives a good, brief summary of the characteristics which, according to Scripture, may be expected in the coming dictator. "To sum up," he writes, "this great enemy of God to appear at the end of this period of history is given to boastful utterances, to

(*Continued on page 369*)

[1] Now approximately 14,000 volumes.

Notes on Open Letters

"Springtime and Resurrection"

In your valued paper, dated March 13, the writer of the first article, "Springtime and Resurrection," says: "In the spring, gladness and exhilaration are in the very atmosphere, *for there is new life everywhere.*" This last statement is too inclusive, for the countries south of the equator are going into fall and winter. My contention is that there is no analogy in nature to be cited in proof of the resurrection. The Christian doctrine of the resurrection is exclusively and uniquely a truth of our Christian faith. The Holy Spirit, with his mystery of divine life, quickens our dead, sinful natures into newness of spiritual life — see Ephesians 2:1. It is eternal life, here and now, so that physical death is but the gateway into life hereafter. Nature is alive and living all through the cold and snow of winter, and if any of the products of nature do not survive the freezing temperatures there is no manifestation of life in the spring. No foliage appears on a dead tree or shrub.—*A retired Ohio Methodist minister.*

A more temperate description of spring might have included "the temperate zone." But it is doubtful whether anyone really misunderstood what was meant, and it is safe to say that whenever the spring comes, either above or below the equator, "there is new life everywhere."

The Editor was careful to say that "the springtime recalls and illustrates that great foundation fact of our faith, the bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and of all who trust in Him." He did not say that the two are exactly parallel in every respect. Someone has well said, "No illustration can stand on four legs," that is, every aspect of an illustration cannot be made to apply to every part of the truth it illustrates. The minister is right in saying that if plant life dies in the winter it will not revive in the spring. But it is a fact that the *appearance* of new life in the spring has often made Christian people think of the Resurrection. The Lord Jesus drew many illustrations from nature, and Paul used plant life as an illustration of the Resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15.

A World-Wide Tract Ministry

Answering urgent appeals for Gospel literature from many countries

By JOHN FERGUSON

MRS. EVA HARRISON, wife of Brigadier General W. K. Harrison of the United States Army in Japan, wrote the following letter:

Dear Mr. Ferguson:

I have had the great honor of distributing your wonderful Gospel tracts to the lost here in Japan. I have been here seven months and have given out thousands. You are doing a marvelous work here through your literature. God bless you. I gave out the last tracts I had last Sunday to my class of American children. They were to distribute them to the Japanese in their homes. I shall appreciate it very much if you will kindly send me some more of the tracts in Japanese and English. You may send me any helps that you think I should use here.

From Mr. H. Villavecer, Negros, Philippine Islands:

Dear Mr. Ferguson:

I received the box containing the Bibles. Thank you in sending them to me. I wish I could let you be a witness and see the joy of everyone receiving the gift. Crowds have been coming to my house when they heard the news. I have instructed those who received the books with address of the owner to write to them their thankfulness. I have been praying God to bless the gift, the giver, and Brother John Ferguson for this valuable help to those who are hungry and thirsty for the Words of Life. And at the end of my pilgrimage on earth I shall kneel before Him and bless Him for directing me to Brother Ferguson. The tracts you sent are distributed every night before and after our services. They are also read in our congregation every Sunday by our numbers in the absence of Bibles. Our attendance in the Sunday services is more than three hundred.

From Mr. A. Blattner, Venezuela, South America:

Dear Mr. Ferguson:

We are in very urgent need of a good supply of Gospel tracts in Spanish for free distribution. We have been home on furlough for the past year, and on our return find that we have no supply of tracts in any of our stations, and *all are begging for them* continually. Our people do a great deal of personal work, using tracts in this ministry, and feel greatly handicapped for lack of them.

From Franz Siegel, Berlin, Germany:

Dear Mr. Ferguson:

Many thanks for your kindness in recommending me to Chaplain Jones. He received me kindly and gave me Gospel tracts in German. No tracts being printed in Germany, these were literally torn out of my hands as I distributed them here in Berlin. *The hunger for the word of God is every bit as great as bodily hunger.* In order to fulfill every request I need 1,000 to 2,000 more of each tract.

. . . . . .

From the day General MacArthur entered Japan, army chaplains have written us, stating in every letter that the Japanese are hungry for the Word of God and the Gospel message. Probably no generation of Christians has ever been presented the open door and the opportunity for effective missionary and Gospel testimony that Japan offers our generation of believers.

Although the thunderheads of war are piling up again on the world's horizon, yet there are still great opportunities for the proclamation of the Gospel as an aftermath of the last war. Mr. Ferguson has been led of God, little by little, to publish tracts in many languages. He has now published booklets and tracts in twenty-five languages and is sending them into many parts of the world. He is a member of the Assemblies of Brethren ("Open"), and the headquarters of his tract distribution are at 1312 Lafayette Bldg., Detroit 26.

From Korea also has come an unceasing volume of appeals for Gospel literature in Korean for multitudes who are thirsting for the Water of Life.

As soon as we learned of the great hunger in these countries, and within a few weeks after MacArthur had entered Japan, we had powerful Japanese tracts and booklets on their way to chaplains and servicemen who pleaded for them. We obtained excellent tracts written by E. B. Craig, a missionary with Exclusive Brethren of forty years' labor, and we reprinted some fifteen of them, such as "The True God and False Gods," "What It Means to Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," "Do You Have Peace?" and other tracts setting forth human depravity, the need of repentance, and the value to God of the shed blood and finished work of Calvary. We were also led of the Lord to reprint tracts written by Commissioner Yamamuro of the Salvation Army. We have never been able to supply the demand for these tracts such as "Repentance and Faith," "Christ Our Saviour," "Life After Death," "The Wages of Sin," and other effective Gospel appeals. We are now about to print ten titles for children, in Japanese. To date we have sent two and one-quarter million tracts in Japanese into and throughout the length and breadth of Japan. We have just printed a large edition of a Japanese booklet, "A Guide to Faith," containing fifty-two pages of solid Gospel.

Chaplain James A. Wood from Korea wrote to say that he was adjacent to a huge leper colony, where there was a great eagerness for the Gospel message. It was a joy to send him thousands of copies of the Korean tracts which we had printed, such as "Four Things God Wants You to Know" and "The Price God Paid for You."

The Japanese Army, in its determined purpose to stamp out Christianity, systematically looted and destroyed all Christian homes in the Philippines of every book, tract, and magazine containing the name of Christ. Appeals have poured in from dozens of Christian workers, not only for vast quantities of tracts in English and in Ilocanos, but also for used books of a devotional and expositional nature, to replace libraries destroyed by the invaders. We have been sending quantities of used Christian books; and several million tracts and booklets in English have gone out to the Philippines.

China has also been supplied with tracts in Chinese which we had printed by the photo offset process. We have just printed a booklet in Chinese, entitled, "The Sinner's Friend." This contains sixty-two pages of wonderful Gospel material.

The Hunger for Christian Literature

Every country in South America has been heard from, pleading for literature for the millions who have come into literacy and who are hungry for the printed page. The letters we receive state that people are "clamoring for tracts," "begging for them continually," "pleading for literature to take with them to their villages and homes beyond the mountains and along the jungle rivers." Mr. Frederick Glass, of Brazil, author of "Adventures With the Bible in Brazil," wrote, asking us for literature in Portuguese. We made a survey of all available Portuguese Gospel literature in the United States and found there was an amazingly small quantity and assortment for the forty-five million Portuguese-speaking people of that great country. So we have before us the publication of tracts in Portuguese and, in particular, booklets, such as "God's Way of Salvation," by Alexander Marshall, one of the best we have had translated into that language.

So often "the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-Day Adventists, and other cults and heresies, realizing the hunger for the printed page, have sent their well-equipped colporteurs into the mission fields of the world and particularly into almost every corner of South America, with their literature. Shall we not pray that God will send forth an army of colporteurs from among the "children

of light" into these vast countries? The great increase in literacy and in the reading habits of people has lifted Gospel literature distribution to an entirely new level of importance and effectiveness.

As soon as the troops entered Germany we began to supply the chaplains with the finest of Gospel literature for the German people. No one can overemphasize the hunger of the people of Germany for the Word of God and the Gospel, and we shall always be grateful to God that He enabled us to start pouring into Germany through the army chaplains, on the very week they entered, sound Gospel literature in German. We have sent hundreds of thousands of booklets, such as "God's Way of Salvation," by Marshall, "Safety, Certainty, and Enjoyment," by Cutting, and "The Reason Why," by Laidlaw, in German, throughout the length and breadth of that country and Austria. We have supplied more than sixty of Germany's major cities. Just to give an illustration of the hundreds of appeals that have come from Germany, a chaplain wrote to say he was in charge of the territory including Augsburg, Munich, and Inglestadt, saying all of the Christian workers in these three large cities were looking to him for Gospel material, and that he could use 100,000 of each German tract and booklet we could send. That is one of the many such open doors God has given us from the beginning of the Occupation, for getting these life-giving messengers to the people of Germany. We have had translated into German such tracts as "I Am Not Going to a Christless Grave," "Where Will You Spend Eternity?" "The Law Knows No Mercy," "Five Things God Offers You," "Six Irrefutable Facts," and "How the Captain Found Peace." We also obtained from Switzerland a series of the choicest German leaflet tracts and had those reprinted. In addition to sending over two million booklets and tracts that we had printed, we have acted as distributor for others who have printed literature in German and have wanted it distributed. In all, we have been responsible for more than 3,500,000 tracts, carefully placed in Germany and Austria. The effect of that distribution appears in letters we receive every week, telling of souls finding Christ.

We have also been pouring Gospel literature into the cities of France. Tens of thousands of tracts have been sent, also, into France's penitentiaries, hospitals, and harbors and into Britanny, where there is so little Gospel. One brother wrote that his was the only Gospel testimony among a million people in Britanny. In all, we have supplied over three hundred distributors throughout France. We had Alexander Marshall's great tract, "God's Way of Salvation," translated into French. Fifty thousand copies came off the press in June, 1947.

We have also been sending booklets and tracts in French to Africa and French West Indies and elsewhere throughout the world, wherever that language is spoken.

Into Holland and Belgium we have sent "Safety, Certainty, and Enjoyment" in Dutch, and many have found Christ in hospitals, prisoners-of-war camps, and among the youth of the Netherlands and Belgium.

It also has been our great joy to supply the Displaced Persons Centers in Germany and Austria and now in Belgium and England, with tracts in the following languages: Polish, Russian, Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, and Czechoslovakian. We receive approximately fifty letters a week from Europe, alone, beseeching us for Gospel literature. Almost every letter that comes states that multitudes are hungry for the message. The interest in Germany and Austria seems to be among all classes, young and old. We have found that the booklet, "The Reason Why," in German, is ideally suited for the young people who were deprived by the Nazis of a knowledge of the Word of God and the way of salvation.

The field of foreign language Gospel literature is a great one. Millions throughout the world have come into literacy so that a great new channel has been opened. It is a field that should appeal to young Christians in colleges and universities, seeking guidance as to their life work in His service and to Christian craftsmen printers who should lay their talents at the Master's feet. It will be many years before these countries are able, adequately, to meet their own needs as to Gospel literature. The appreciation from abroad can be found in the words of Dr. Vansteenberghe, co-director of the Belgian Gospel Mission, who wrote some months ago as follows:

> One thing is certain, and that is that the tracts which you send fall into the hands of people who are most eager to read. We cannot praise the Lord enough for your co-operation. He has called you and set you aside at a most critical time, to do what we cannot do for the moment—print suitable tracts. It must be a source of deep gratitude to the Lord for you and your helpers to know that *your labor is answering the most pressing need of our times. The need for evangelical literature is appalling. I never imagined that it could be so great.*

We are living in a literary age. People throughout the world are reading as never before, and Christian service must keep pace with the global hunger for the printed page. In the months to come we expect to print large additional quantities of tracts in Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Portuguese, and in Polish, French, Dutch, and German. But distribution on such a scale must be accompanied by much earnest prayer. "Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." The promise of fruit is to him "that goeth forth and weepeth." Should not countries that are drenched in tears of grief, where the incorruptible Seed is being sown, call from our hearts prayers offered in tears? A great outpouring of God's grace in the salvation of multitudes is certain to follow.

DETROIT.

The "Meetings of Vision"

A prayer call from the Dohnavur Fellowship in South India

By AMY WILSON CARMICHAEL

EVERY year, immediately after Christmas, we have meetings for those who are in earnest to follow on to know the Lord, and for those who are seeking heavenly light. We call these meetings by a Tamil name meaning "Meetings of Vision." Some who have not been disobedient to the heavenly vision are now witnessing openly to the living Lord. These little groups of people are like small clusters of stars in a dark sky. Others have not as yet dared to take the hard step of open confession in baptism, but have ceased to worship idols and are known to be worshipers of the true God. For their open confession at all costs, we wait in faith.

Between the garden land, where the children live, and the hospital is a hall—the Hall of Good Tidings. It is a spacious, cool, and pleasant place, with a flowery trellis on two sides instead of walls, and little rooms fitted into the corners where small classes can be held, or one or two can talk together.

The people who gather in the hall for these meetings are chiefly those who have heard the Gospel in the hospital where doctors and nurses are seekers of souls. Others have heard in the meetings taken for craftsmen, builders, and land-workers, or in the villages. Most belong to the exclusive castes of South India, who are as a whole still unreached. Men, women, and children come, and there are separate meetings for each group.

This year, Mr. C. Godfrey Webb-Peploe, who was leading the series of meetings, invited our friend, Mr. Samuel of Madras, to join us in this ministry. He spoke each morning and was used to help many. The meetings ended in a baptism service on New Year's Day, and all of the fourteen, who on that shining morning took their stand as followers

of their crucified, risen, and glorified Redeemer, had a story, which, if only it could be fully told, would thrill the heart of the Lord's lovers. But such stories can never be fully told.

Among the fourteen was one who had been for ten years subject to demon possession. Just before the baptism hour some feared that the evil spirit, who had for so long possessed her, had asserted his power over her again. But, after a quiet talk with Mr. Samuel, all doubts were removed, and she and her husband, who had been converted a few weeks before she was, went into the water together.

And now as I write, something quite new has happened. Twenty-two women from a village some distance away have come to the hospital. "It is true we have come for medicine, but we have come first to hear the words of life," they said to Dr. Christian Rogan, head of the women's side of the hospital. And they explained that those who went to the Meetings of Vision returned so full of joy, saying the Lord was here, that they, too, wanted to know about Him. And so the blessed light spreads.

To plan for meetings like these is never an easy matter. The ground is contested in every possible way Satanic skill can devise. But all around the world we know there is prayer, and year by year the people come. The workers need special help. The meetings follow straight upon a strenuous term's work, in nurseries, schoolrooms, and hospital. But again and again we prove it true that the joy of the Lord is their strength.

This note will be waste writing if it merely wakens passing interest. It is written definitely to ask the readers of THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TIMES to pray for preparation for the next Meetings of Vision, and for these lately illuminated, who are now, even as these words are being read, in great need of prayer. For, by each newly-lighted fire, there is always one standing who "casts much water upon it." But if only the Man with the vessel of oil in His hands continually but secretly casts oil into the fire, that fire will burn higher and hotter.

Then also we urgently need prayer for protection for those who seek to save little children from pollution, and for guidance and steadfastness of purpose for all of us to whom the care of these little ones is committed. The spiritual training of children is no small undertaking. We also ask for prayer for our Indian fellow workers, almost all of whom are our own dear children, now grown up and become comrades and fellow lovers; we ask not for easy, casual prayer, the easy and the casual will do nothing in India now. We ask for the prayer that prevails.

TINNEVELLY, SOUTH INDIA.

The latest account of the work of the Pohnavur Fellowship may be found in Miss Carmichael's book, "Though the Mountains Shake." (It may be obtained from Loizeaux Bros., Inc., 19 W. 21st St., New York 10; $3.50.)

Tested Plans for Your Junior Department

Helps for stimulating attendance and holding interest

By ELIZABETH WILLIAMS SUDLOW

A MIDWESTERN Sunday school some months ago observed the annual banquet given for graduates of the Junior Department. The yearly custom of so honoring graduates started about a quarter of a century ago, and is now one of the traditional events of the school. Each year the mothers of the Juniors about to be promoted to the Intermediate Department entertain the graduates and all the teachers and officers of the department at a dinner. The meal is followed by a program participated in by both teachers and scholars. Nothing elaborate is planned; everything is kept on a simple scale. Occasionally a guest speaker makes a short address.

A "birthday blackboard" is used in one room. On the first Sunday of the month, the name of every Junior having a birthday during the month is written on the board. After a special service for the birthday person is observed on the proper Sunday and the good wishes of the group offered, the Junior himself selects a colored chalk and draws a line through his name.

There is a "B B" poster in blue and gold hanging on the wall of this room. It is designed to cover a three-month period, ruled to give space for each Sunday in the quarter. Down one side are listed the class names. "B B" stands for Bible Bringers, so, each Sunday, the secretary enters on the chart the number of Bibles brought by the members of each class. Much good-natured rivalry is developed by each class trying to have a perfect score. Perfect records are marked by a large gold star.

A beautiful banner stands beside the teacher of the class that can report the largest percentage of members having been present at morning church service the previous Sunday. This group is expected to be able to give the morning text, together with one or two of the hymns used in that service. This is a very good idea for encouraging church attendance and attention.

A "rain check" is given to those members who are present on a stormy Sunday. The check — a small Scripture text card — is not transferable, and once a year the boy or girl who has acquired the largest number is given a small award. There is a suitable recognition service for all who have obtained a sizeable number, that number being determined by the kind of Sunday weather as indicated on a chart. This has fifty-two spaces, each marked with a bright yellow or black circle. The black indicates a bad weather day.

This particular Junior Department observes several special Sundays throughout the year, each of which is marked by gifts brought by the boys and girls. On Wash Cloth Day, gifts of wash cloths are brought, and these are sent to a mission in which the school is interested. Then there is Marble Day, when marbles are collected for the boys in a home. On Soap Day, toilet soap is brought for an Old Folks' Home; Handkerchief Day, when pretty handkerchiefs are sent to two missionaries supported by the church. On Flower Sunday, the special offering of flowers is sent to the sick of the parish and to a near-by hospital. Thus some special offering is taken at least once each quarter and the children are learning to share their everyday belongings with others.

The following plan has been found to be a most satisfactory method of making a boy or a girl feel at home in the new department, and in making him conscious of the responsibilities he assumes when becoming a Junior. When he enters the department, he is asked to sign the following pledge:

"I promise to be regular in attendance, courteous in behavior, and faithful in my work, and to do all I can to help others to do the same." The Junior signs two copies; one is kept by the teacher and he retains the other. Every time a new member is received into the department and signs the pledge, it is repeated in unison by the group.

CORAL GABLES, FLA.

"This Atomic Age and the Word of God"

(Continued from second page)

self-deification, to an irresistible execution of whatever he wills, to the persecution of the children of God, the blaspheming of the name of God, and the worship of military power." In discussing the world dictator, Dr. Smith quotes several important commentaries on prophetic passages.

Dr. Smith takes up at length just what is meant by "the prince of the power of the air," and the vital importance that even the *air* itself has assumed in our modern life. Here he quotes Hanson W. Baldwin, the well-known New York

(Continued on page 381)

International Uniform Lesson

LESSON 6. MAY 9. EZRA LEADS A RELIGIOUS REVIVAL

Ezra 7:6-10; Nehemiah 8 to 10:13; printed text, Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5, 6, 8; 10:28-32

Golden Text.—Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only.—Jas. 1:22

KING JAMES VERSION

Neh. 8:1 And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that *was* before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel.

2 And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.

3 And he read therein before the street that *was* before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people *were attentive* unto the book of the law.

5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up:

6 And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with *their* faces to the ground.

8 So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused *them* to understand the reading.

Chap. 10:28 And the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the porters, the singers, the Nethinims, and all they that had separated themselves from the people of the lands unto the law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, every one having knowledge, and having understanding;

29 They clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes;

30 And that we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons:

31 And *if* the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell, *that* we would not buy it of them on the sabbath, or on the holy day: and *that* we would leave the seventh year, and the exaction of every debt.

32 Also we made ordinances for us, to charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel for the service of the house of our God.

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The Lesson as a Whole

By H. A. Ironside, Litt.D.
Pastor of the Moody Memorial Church, Chicago

Approach to the Lesson

IN EVERY genuine revival among God's people, the revealed Word of the Lord has had a large place. It was so in the several great movements in the days of such godly kings of Judah as Josiah and Hezekiah. It has ever been so throughout the Christian centuries. It was the return to the Word of God that brought about the great reformation of the sixteenth century, and every true spiritual awakening since has been based upon Bible study and Bible practice. In the days of Ezra and Nehemiah it was the return to the testimony of the Scriptures, the recognition of the authority of the Law of God, that brought about revival and blessing.

After the first enthusiasm the remnant settled down, as is so often the case, into self-complacency and comparative indifference to the claims of God. Nehemiah was the chosen instrument to arouse them to the importance of building up the wall of separation and giving themselves anew to the work of the Lord. Then Ezra was used of God to call them back to that which was written, in order that the Holy Scriptures might have the place of authority in the lives of the remnant. As the Word of God showed them wherein they had failed, they turned to the Lord in repentance and confession, and as a result there came a time of special appreciation of the goodness of Him who had intervened so blessedly on their behalf, and coupled with this was the earnest purpose of heart to do His will, judging in the light of His holy law all that was contrary to His mind. This brought about material prosperity also, for when God has His rightful place, it is His delight to pour out tokens of His favor upon His people.

The Historical Setting

It was in the year 446 B.C. that King Artaxerxes gave Nehemiah his cupbearer, the commission to go up to Jerusalem to rebuild the city and its walls. Nehemiah was appointed governor. During his administration much was accomplished for the security and comfort of the returned remnant of Judah. He took a firm stand against both the enemies of Israel without and the malcontents within the city, some of whom sought to make alliances with the heathen. Working in conjunction with Ezra, the priest, he endeavored to bring all the people into subjection to the Law of God, and much blessing followed his efforts.

Verse by Verse

Neh. 8:1.—*"All the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street [open place] that was before the water gate."* They were a united people waiting on God, ready to hear the reading of His Word. At their earnest request Ezra brought forth the Book of the Law *"which the Lord had commanded in Israel."*

Verse 2.—*"Ezra the priest brought the law before . . . all that could hear with understanding."* All were responsible to hear and obey, and it is good to notice that there was evident desire on their part to bow to the truth and act in accordance with it.

Verse 3.—*"The ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law."* It is always a sure precursor of blessing when people become attentive to the Word, even though it may seem to go contrary to their natural inclinations. It means much to have open ears for divine truth.

Verse 5.—*"When he opened it [the book] all the people stood up."* In this way they showed that respect and reverence for the Holy Scriptures which should characterize God's people at all times.

Verse 6.—*"They bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground."* There was none of the careless flippancy that is seen so often in certain congregations today. God was recognized as worthy of all reverence and adoration, and even in their outward behavior the people expressed that sense of His glorious might and infinite holiness which is becoming in those who draw nigh to Him.

Verse 8.—*"They read in the book in the law of God distinctly,"* not mumbling the words, but expressing them plainly, *"and gave the sense,"* making the meaning clear to all, and so they *"caused them to understand the reading."*

Chap. 10:28.—*"They . . . had separated themselves from the people of the lands unto the law of God."* Throughout the Scriptures we find God ever calling upon His people to separation from the world and its principles, but not that alone. Separation *from* may lead to spiritual pride and conceit. It is the very essence of Phariseeism. So the call goes further. It is separation *to* the Lord Himself. Only as His people give Him His rightful place in their hearts and lives does separation become a vital reality.

Verse 29.—*"They clave to their breth-*

ren, . . . and entered into . . . an oath, to walk in God's law." Under the leadership of Nehemiah and Ezra, the remnant made a solemn league and covenant with God and with one another, pledging themselves to walk in obedience to the Law of the Lord.

Verse 30.—*"That we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons."* Mixed marriages have ever proved a snare and a source of weakness to those who profess to be separated to the Lord. Today, this is as important as ever. We are admonished to avoid the unequal yoke, whether in marriage or in any other relationship of life.

Verse 31.—*"We would not buy . . . on the sabbath, . . . and . . . would leave the seventh year, and the exaction of every debt."* Recognizing the sacredness of the Sabbath Day, the people agreed to refrain from all purchasing of goods on that day, thus devoting it wholly to the Lord. They also promised to keep the law concerning the sabbatic years. For failure to do this, they had been captives in Babylon seventy years till the land had enjoyed her sabbaths (2 Chron. 36:21; Jer. 29:10). The revived remnant also agreed together to consider their needy brethren and not to make exorbitant or ungracious demands upon them.

Verse 32.—*"Also . . . to charge ourselves . . . for the service of the house of our God."* It is often said that the acid test of a man's spirituality is his use of money. Realizing the importance of maintaining the orderly services of the house of God, the people pledged themselves to make regular contributions to sustain it in a proper way. Where grace controls the heart, there will be an end to selfishness, and liberality will take the place of covetousness.

The Heart of the Lesson

The revival recorded here was based upon a return to God and His Word. Where this is true, there will always be restoration and enlargement. Nothing can take the place of what God Himself has revealed. "Bring the Book" was the cry of the Levites associated with Ezra. It is the Book that shows us the will of God, and as we judge ourselves in the light of the Holy Scriptures we can count upon the Lord for revival among believers and an awakening among the unsaved. We need to remember that it is only those who have divine life who can be revived. Therefore revival has to do with believers. But when believers are right with God, He can use them in bringing about an awakening among the lost and Christless.

Lesson Outline

The return to God and His Word (Neh. 8:1-3)

Reverence for the Scriptures manifested (vs. 5, 6)

The Word understood and applied (v. 8)

Entering into a covenant with God (chap. 10:28-32)

Special Lesson Topics and Truths

Not Human Opinion, but God's Own Word. Observe that when God speaks there is no room for human thoughts and opinions. His Word calls for absolute obedience, even though that may mean parting with many preconceived notions and turning from many age-long practices for which there is no divine authority. The Scriptures are all-sufficient as the guide for the child of God who desires to have the Lord's approval.

Summaries and Applications

In order to grasp the full import of the present lesson, one should read carefully the previous seven chapters of Nehemiah, which show us what led up to the revival here depicted.

God will never disappoint His saints when they come together *"as one man"* with earnest purpose of heart to learn what His will is as revealed in His Word, and to walk in the truth as it is opened up to them.

When reading the Scriptures in public it is very important to follow the example given here and read distinctly so that each word may carry its full weight to the hearer.

Neither Ezra nor Nehemiah sought to foist their own personal views upon the people of the Lord. They gave them the Word and called upon them to act in accordance with it.

It is a grievous thing when merely human writings are put upon a level with the Holy Scriptures. When questions arise, we should refer not to what this or that teacher may think, but we should ask, "What saith the Scripture?"

It was a great Bible conference that was held in the open place by the water gate in Jerusalem, and it had great results. Would that all our Bible conferences were of that same character!

CHICAGO.

Last Week's Lesson

5. May 2.—Nehemiah Rebuilds Jerusalem . . . . . Nehemiah 1 to 7

Next Week's Lesson

7. May 16—Malachi Demands Sincere Religion . . . . . Malachi

Questions for Teacher and Class

By Pastor J. C. Macaulay
Wheaton Bible Church, Wheaton, Ill.

WHAT was Ezra's purpose in going up to Jerusalem?

2. What was the secret of Ezra's prosperity?

3. Why did not Ezra have a military escort like Nehemiah?

4. What was the sin that imperiled restored Israel?

5. What two sins were the subject of the covenant in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah?

6. Which verse in the lesson is a good definition of preaching?

7. How did the congregation indicate their reverence toward the Word of God?

8. How should we listen to the Word of God?

9. Why did the people weep at hearing the Word of God? (8:9.)

10. What is the reward of hearing and obeying the Word of God?

(Answers on page 378)

From the Platform

By Joseph Edwin Harris

A Prayer Before the Lesson.—Our gracious Heavenly Father, from whom our every blessing comes, we are grateful for health, for food and clothing, for home and dear ones, but more we thank Thee for Thy Word and the light it gives by which to live in a world made dark by sin. Make us clean from all evil, Father, hold us in the path of right when we are tempted, and give us strength for all we must do and bear each day. Bless the land in which we live, and cause the righteousness that exalts nations to abound here. Bless Thy church here and in all places, that through her the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus may go out to all people. Help those who forget Thee to see how much they owe Thee and how much they need Thee. So may they repent and trust and obey the Saviour. Give Thy special blessing to the sick, the sad, and the needy, and show us and all Thy people how to live in the spirit of Him who came not to be ministered unto but to minister. Hear us and do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think for Christ's sake. Amen.

After the Lesson.—How many of you have read the tales of the Covenanters, those brave people of Scotland many years ago who solemnly bound themselves to hold fast to that worship of God which they believed to be most in accord with His Word? It meant persecution even to death for some, but they stood by their pledged word. Even

LET IN LIVE THE WORD OUT

boys and girls were among those who suffered rather than be disloyal to God. The Covenanters were following the example of the people of Judah in Ezra's time when they solemnly pledged themselves to be true to God and His Word. Our lesson says they "entered . . . into an oath, to walk in God's law." First there had been a great gathering of the people to hear God's Word read and explained. Then they set themselves to carry out its teachings.

That is always the thing to do about God's Word. Like Ezra, your teachers read and explain God's Word to you here each Lord's Day. I hope that be-

tween Sundays you will really work at obeying God. It is wonderful what God's Word does for people who both hear and obey it. But it is terrible how hardened we get by listening to His Word and paying no heed to it. These people were like the Psalmist who wrote, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Be sure you get God's Word in your heart and keep your life in line with its teaching.

VANCOUVER, B. C., CAN.

The Busy Men's Corner

By Tom M. Olson

"And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street . . . and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book" (Neh. 8:1).—Because the expression "all the people" occurs eleven times throughout the chapter (and once "all the congregation" is mentioned), we conclude the Holy Spirit would impress us with the fact that the Word of God is for all—not just for the priest.

A modern sight comparable to the one which our chapter describes would be a sunrise service in a place like Soldier Field in Chicago with a believer like Dr. Charles E. Fuller reading the Holy Scriptures distinctly and giving the sense thereof to the assembled multitude.

It was not uncommon in the days of the eighteenth century revival for a godly man like George Whitefield to preach the Word to multiplied thousands of eager listeners in the early hours of the morning.

According to reports, this scene has been witnessed numerous times in various parts of Europe since the war. No building, large enough to accommodate the thousands yearning to hear the Word of God, was left unbombed, so the service was conducted in the open air.

Although it has been my happy privilege to preach the Word to thousands of people in the open, it has always been at some other time of day than the morning.

When thousands upon thousands of people are willing to arise in the morning and leave other duties to hear the Word of God read and expounded, there can be no question about a genuine revival being on!

"Upon the first day of the seventh month" (v. 2).—Referring to Leviticus 23:24 it will be learned that the first day of the seventh month in Israel was "a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation."

I had a dear friend who loved the Lord and His Word deeply, but who insisted that the Lord Jesus Christ must come for His Church on the first day of the seventh month, according to Israel's calendar, which corresponds to October in ours. He was ready for the Lord to come at any time, but he made special preparation each year on that date and waited for translation. He is now with the Lord, but there are others like him still on earth insisting the Lord cannot come for the Church at any other time than October. Such a theory is due to an oversight. The blowing of the trumpets symbolizes the regathering of Israel to the Land of Promise, which event is to occur at the manifestation of the Son of man in glory (Matt. 24: 29-31; 25:31; Psa. 102:16); but no date is mentioned for the rapture of the Church. It is to occur "suddenly," and it is to be "in the air" (1 Thess. 4:16, 17).

The time is near for Israel to enter upon her "seventh month." The Psalmist's word, "Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day" (Psa. 81:3), shall then be fulfilled. How much nearer is the time for the blowing of the "trump of God" when the dead in Christ shall rise, and living believers be caught up together with them to meet our Lord in the air!

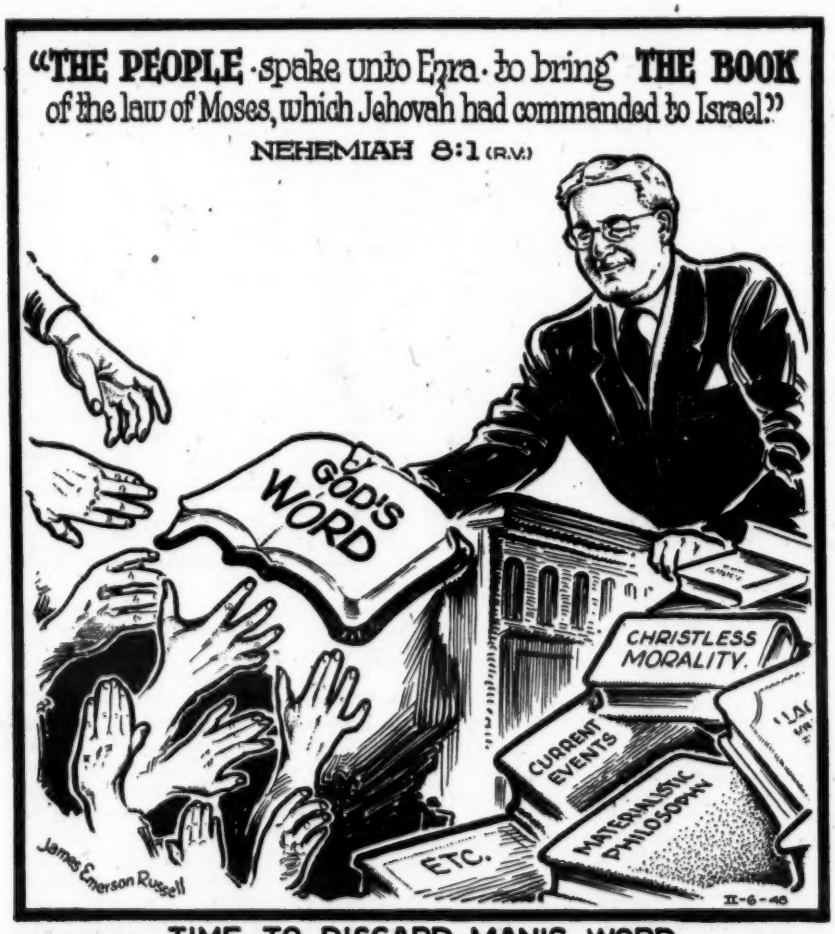
According to Numbers 10:1-10, there were many occasions on which the silver trumpets were to be blown. In our lesson they were blown "for the calling of the assembly" to hear the Word of God.

"And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground" (Neh. 8:6).—All the people were "attentive" (v. 3); all the people saw the Book; and "all the people stood up" (v. 5), for they were in the street; and all the people said, "Amen, Amen," and worshiped (v. 6); and "all the people wept" (v. 9).

It used to be a custom in some churches to have an "Amen corner"; but here "all the people" were in the Amen corner!

I have been surprised more than once while on the platform when, out of the stillness pervading the building, a hearty "Amen" would ring out in response to the reading or exposition of the Word. How would a preacher feel if an entire congregation, without coaching, spontaneously and intelligently said, "Amen, Amen"? Ezra had that experience.

Amen-ing has been—and is—overdone in some places, but in others it is nil. "Amen" is frequently heard at the



TIME TO DISCARD MAN'S WORD

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end of a song and a prayer. Is the Word of God less important in our estimation? Saying "Amen" has been discouraged, if not actually forbidden, in some churches. How this must grieve Him, one of whose titles is "the Amen"! (Rev. 3:14.)

"They . . . entered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in God's law . . . and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes" (Neh. 10:29).—They were "doers" as well as "hearers" of the Word.

A missionary relates that he once whistled for his dog; and immediately the dog came running at top speed. A native saw the dog's response, and said in his native tongue that which meant, "Your dog is all ear" (obedient).

The missionary said afterward, "I got hold of that expression at once, and found I had a beautiful word for 'obedience.'" Let us be "all ear" in that sense to our Lord.

WAWONA, CALIF.

Say, Fellows,—

Wade C. Smith's Boys' Class

SAY, fellows, Ezra is one of the mountain peaks in Jewish history. If you like a real hero of the solid type (nothing conspicuous or flashy), take a good look at this stalwart, who, perhaps more than any other of God's great and honored servants, was instrumental in arresting the wholesale drift of the Jews into heathenism (idolatry) and bringing them back to the worship of the God of Israel. It was a monumental achievement, and one which could be accomplished only by one who in his early young manhood "had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments" (Ezra 7:10). In a nutshell, this simply means that early in life Ezra recognized God's Word as the only safe, wise, and happy rule of life.

Early in life, Ezra, like Daniel, "purposed in his heart" that he would devote his life to living and teaching God's Law. He was born in captivity, far away from the beloved Jerusalem of his forefathers. The Persian king had given permission to the Jews to return to their native country and to rebuild the destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple; and many had gone, but reports coming back said the building was difficult and faltering, and there were many adversaries. The Jews remaining in captivity were prosperous, and most of them were content to live out their lives in Babylonia.

But Ezra was one of the exceptions. He longed to do something more than had yet been done for the restoration of his people in their traditional homeland. Now, fellows, drive a nail right here; for this is where Ezra showed his wisdom. You fellows might prefer to call it his cleverness, his smartness. It was that, too, but more: he was *wise*. Ezra, seeing the tremendous task his people had undertaken, and the plight they were in, and wanting to be of the greatest service to God and to His people, turned to the Word of God as the only thing that could show the true way of success. What a pity — what a tragedy it is! — that the statesmen of the world today (including Washington, D. C., and Congress) could not have the wisdom of the captive Jew, Ezra, and see that God Almighty, the Creator of the universe, is the only One who can point the sure way out of a baffling problem — national or international or personal.

Ezra soon learned that God had made certain definite promises for the protection and the personal welfare of His people Israel; that those promises had certain conditions attached. So he set his mind to prepare "his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments." You cannot hide a fellow like that. The great Persian king, Artaxerxes, discovered him. God had touched the king's heart to send an expedition to Jerusalem to bolster up their faltering efforts, and he chose Ezra as the man to lead it, giving him every assistance in the way of silver and gold from the king's treasury, as well as commanding the governors of the provinces around Jerusalem to co-operate in every possible way. (Just read the magnitude of it in Ezra 7:14-23.) And to give the spiritual emphasis, which meant more to Ezra than anything else, he delivered to him the holy vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had brought from Jerusalem. "Those," said the king, "deliver thou before the God of Jerusalem."

Well, so did God-fearing, God-believing, God-loving Ezra go who "had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord"; and his arrival at Jerusalem was the beginning of a great revival; not only the revival of the work of building, but a great spiritual awakening and a coming back to God and to the observance of His laws. (Read the 8th, 9th, and 10th chapters of Nehemiah for the account of it.) And in it all there is one thing bound to impress you: it is the great joy the people experienced in hearing and understanding the Word of God. God's Word is the Gospel of joy. Once you read it and begin to do as it teaches (which includes your acceptance of Jesus Christ as your Saviour) you find that nothing else you ever tried yields such satisfactions. Let me give you two gems of thought about the Bible: this from Dr. Alphonso Smith, once occupying the chair of English at the University of Virginia, and later at Annapolis:

> I yield to no one in my admiration of the classical literatures, and of the more technical literature of scientific achievement. But in vividness and intensity, in elevation of appeal, in the extent of her literary empire and in the duration of her sovereignty, the Bible takes easy and secure precedence. The advance nations of the world are the children of her fireside, the centuries themselves have been but handmaidens in her service. There is no modern literature worthy the name that has not felt her influence; there is no regnant people whose strivings she has not shepherded.

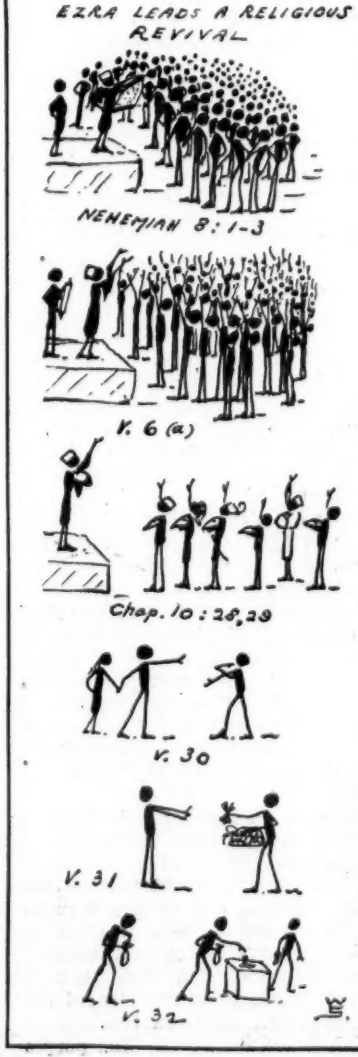
And this from Woodrow Wilson:

> I am sorry for men who do not read the Bible every day; I wonder why they deprive themselves of the strength and of the pleasure. It is one of the most singular books in the world, for every time you open it some old text that you have read a score of times suddenly beams with a new meaning. There is no other book that I know of, of which this is true; there is no other book that yields its meaning so personally, that seems to fit itself so intimately to the very spirit that is seeking its guidance.

AUGUSTA, GA.

Little Jetts Teach the Lesson

By Wade C. Smith



My Class of Girls

By Vivian D. Gunderson

PUTTING GOD'S COMMANDS INTO PRACTICE

ONE day I went to visit at the home of two of our Sunday school scholars. While I was there the mother asked these two little girls to pick up their toys and put them away. The children went on playing. After a few minutes the mother said again, "Hurry up and put your toys away." Still the children paid no attention.

Then I said, "I am afraid you girls have forgotten Colossians 3:20." The older one looked sweetly up at me and said, "I remember it. 'Children, obey your parents in all things.'" The younger one chimed in, "for this is well pleasing unto the Lord." They said the verse perfectly, but to my utter amazement, even after they had said it, neither one made a single move toward putting her toys away. What was wrong with them? They were not doers of the Word, but hearers only.

In the Cradle Roll Department we once had a very spoiled little girl. She would gather up all the toys in the room and hug them to her breast, saying, "Mine, mine!" I came into the room one day when she was holding all the toys while the other children had nothing with which to play. I said to her, "Doris, God is looking at you." She looked solemn. Then I said, "God says, 'Be ye kind.' It is *not* kind to keep all the toys. Mary wants something to play with. Johnny wants something to play with. God says, 'Be ye kind.' God is looking to see if Doris will be kind." She stood a full minute without moving. Then slowly she started passing out the toys to the other children. And she never again took all the toys at once. Doris was barely three, and she was badly spoiled, yet that day she began to be a doer of the Word and not a hearer only.

Our lesson today is on putting God's commands into practice. Our Bible portion is still back in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah.

When Nehemiah came to Jerusalem to start the work of rebuilding the walls, Ezra was already there. Ezra was a priest of Israel who constantly studied God's Word, obeyed it, and taught it to others. Today we have the story of a great revival that took place among the Jews in Jerusalem under the leadership of Ezra.

Nehemiah 8 tells of the beginning of this revival. It took place in the seventh month according to Jewish reckoning. About what month would that be for us? On the first day of the seventh month all the people came together to hear the Word of God. A great wooden platform, or pulpit, had been built in the street. On it stood fourteen of the leaders of Israel, seven on one side of Ezra and six on the other. The people were all gathered in the street below. When Ezra opened God's holy Word all the people stood up in reverence. When he prayed they all bowed their heads and worshiped. Then the whole congregation remained standing all the time God's Word was read. Find out how long that was (v. 3). The returned Jews were more earnest hearers of the Word than most people are today. Have you ever heard anyone complain that the service was too long? There is no record of such a complaint that day.

Read verse 8. The people heard and understood God's Word and that made them weep. Why? Because they had failed to do what it said. Then Nehemiah, the governor, told the people not to weep any more, but to go home and celebrate the day with joy, for it was holy unto the Lord. They were to feast instead of fast.

Do you remember the two men we read of a couple of weeks ago who came to ask Zechariah if they should continue to celebrate the Jewish fasts? What was the answer God gave to Zechariah for them? Now, years after, the Jews were ready to obey God, and immediately He kept His promise. One of the very days they were talking about in Zechariah was this fast of the seventh month. (See Zech. 8:19.) Do you see how faithfully God keeps His promises?

The next day all the Jewish leaders came to Ezra again to learn more from God's Word. This time they read Leviticus 23. There they found directions for keeping the Feast of Tabernacles, which was to be observed in the middle of the seventh month. This was their special Thanksgiving season. At this time they were to make booths of tree branches in which to camp out for a week. They were not only to thank God for the harvest, but also for His deliverance when their nation had been enslaved in Egypt. Living in these booths would remind them of their tents in the wilderness, where for forty years God had miraculously provided for them on their way from Egypt to Canaan.

As soon as they found out from God's Word about the Feast of Tabernacles, they set to work that they might celebrate it exactly as God commanded. And all seven days of the feast Ezra read God's Word to the people.

The returned Jews observed the twenty-fourth day of the seventh month as a day of mourning and fasting for their sins. They not only confessed their sins, but they turned from them. They made a solemn covenant with the Lord. Notice that in Nehemiah 10:29 it says they entered into an oath "to walk in God's law, . . . to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord." The next few verses tell specific things in which they were going to obey the Lord. The first one was not to intermarry with the heathen. This is something that we as Christian girls should obey at any cost. (See 2 Cor. 6:14-18.) We must not only be hearers, we must be doers of the Word. Many Christian young people have had their lives ruined by disobedience to God in this very thing.

I shall never forget Barbara. At nineteen she suddenly married an unsaved boy. After just a few months she was completely disillusioned. Over and over she said, "Oh, why did I ever do it? Why should I have to live with him all the rest of my life just because I said a few words in front of a preacher?" And the saddest part of all was that she had no faith to believe he ever would be saved because she knew she had disobeyed the Lord in marrying him. "Whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, *because we keep his commandments*, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (1 John 3:22). Poor Barbara could not say that. She had been a hearer of the Word but not a doer of it.

Let us pray daily that we may never make the fatal mistake of disobeying God in this thing. If we will hear His Word and obey it, we shall find the full joy of His perfect plan for our lives.

FERNDALE, WASH.

For Junior Teachers

By Ruth E. Dow

Topic and Scripture:
Hearing and Doing God's Word
(Neh. 8:1-3, 10-12)

REVIEW game: Add to the slips with names (see article for Lesson 2): Cyrus, Haggai, Nehemiah, Temple, visions, Zechariah. Each child makes a question about the name he has received; for instance — Ezekiel — Who is the prophet who saw God's glory carried by four angels? The teacher may give individual help where needed on making the questions. When a pupil calls for the answer to his question, the slip is given to the one who answers correctly. Who has the most slips at the end of the review?

Suppose! Suppose you did not have a Bible. Suppose the Bible was not read in your home or in your church. Would you know much about what God says in it? Neither did the people who had come back from Babylon know much about their Bible. Their Bible was not a book like yours; it was handwritten on rolls of paper. Probably there were some copies in the Temple, but it was not read to the people in their worship services, though some of the Psalms were sung.

In Babylon lived a priest named Ezra, who was very much interested in the Bible of those days. He read and studied it carefully. He tried to obey God himself, and wanted to teach other people. Especially did he wish to go to Jerusalem and teach his people, who had gone back there, to keep God's Law.

The king gave him permission to go, and along with him anyone else who wished. The king and leading men gave silver and gold, and told Ezra to take it and whatever other people gave, and buy everything needed for the worship of God.

Ezra and a large number of people gathered together to start for Jerusalem. They earnestly prayed God would keep them safe on the long trip through the deserts, where there were many robbers who might attack them to get the gold and silver they were carrying. God did keep them safe all the four months they were traveling with their families and treasures.

Let us visit Jerusalem. It is one of the times when all the people come to Jerusalem for services in the Temple. The sun is just up. All the people, both men and women, and children big enough to listen, are packed into the open street in front of the water gate. What a crowd! A high platform has been built, and on it stand fourteen men. One of them is Ezra. In his hand he holds a roll, containing the Law of Moses which God gave. When Ezra starts to unroll the Book, all the people stand up. Ezra praises the Lord, the great God, for His goodness. All the people answer, "Amen, Amen." They raise their hands toward Heaven, and then bow low, worshiping the Lord. Ezra reads from the Book, and others help explain the meaning to the people. From morning until noon all the people, even the children big enough to understand, pay attention. What a long Sunday school!

Listen! Now all the people are crying. What terrible thing has happened? The people have found out that they have sinned in disobeying God's laws! But Governor Nehemiah, Ezra, and his helpers are trying to quiet the people. "Don't cry. This is a holy day. Instead, go home, have a thanksgiving dinner, and send some to those who do not have any. Be happy in the Lord." Now the crowd is leaving. The rest of the day is happy in feasting and giving. All are happy now, because they know the words of God's Book, and He has forgiven their sins for which they were sorry.

For a whole week the people gather each day to listen to the Word of God. The second day the Law told them of something they should do, and right away all the people went and did it. They were very happy. Why? Because doing what God wants always makes a person happy. It will you, too. Every Sunday you hear of something from God's Word that you should do. Do you do it? "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only" (Jas. 1:22, Memory Verse). Will you read God's Word every day this week?

ORONO, MAINE.

For Primary Teachers

By Ethel S. Low

Topic and Scripture:
Happy Times With the Bible
(Neh. 8:1-3, 10-12)

ONE more lesson in Nehemiah, but this one really tells us about Ezra. On the same strip where you put the hammer and sword last Sunday, put a Bible today (the orange strip).

Aren't we having a great time learning about the people of Israel? Now they have the walls and the Temple rebuilt, and now they want to hear the Word of God. They didn't have Bibles such as we have. There was just one large roll on which was written the books of Moses, which we know as Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. That was all the Bible there was then, but it was the Word of God then just as it is now, though we have much more that God has given since then.

The people gathered in the street that was before the water gate, and asked Ezra to bring out the Book and read to them. All the men and women and all the children that were old enough to understand stood there from morning till noon while Ezra read to them and explained so they could understand what he read. Then the people all said, when Ezra prayed to God, "Amen, Amen."

Then Nehemiah and Ezra told the people not to weep and cry, for it was a day for joy because they had heard the Word of the Lord. The tears were running down their faces, but they were tears of joy. They went their way and ate and drank and had a holy day unto the Lord.

We cannot understand why they should be so excited about hearing the Word of God read, for we hear it every Sunday, and most of us, I hope, hear it every day. But there are places today where people are just as excited about it as the Jews were in that day. We think it is awful if the preacher is a little slow about getting church over on time, but Dr. Oswald Smith told me once about preaching in Latvia, where the people stood, packed into the building as tight as they could stand, while he preached for three hours. He was so tired he had to stop and rest, but they waited for him to preach again, and would have listened all night, but he had to stop. Why? Because they have no Bibles. They are hungry for the Word of God.

In Korea and China people think nothing of walking forty miles; walking, not riding in a comfortable car, and carrying their rice for food — going that far to attend a church service where they can hear God's Word.

Don't you think Americans should be ashamed of the way they treat God? They do not have enough respect for Him even to go to church to hear His

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Word. They could read it for themselves every day, but very few do this.

I hope you will never see the time when you cannot hear God's Word read; but that time may come. Even now there are people trying to keep the Bible off the radio, and out of the schools, so children will never hear it. The Devil hates the Word of God. A very good plan would be for each of you to learn all the verses you can, then if there should be a time when there are no Bibles, you would still have God's Word hid in your heart. Once upon a time there were some men in a country where wicked men were destroying the Bibles, and so they learned the whole Old Testament, so they could write it again if all the Bibles were burned. How would you like to learn the Old Testament?

Here is a good verse for you to remember. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."

FELTON, CALIF.

The Illustration Round Table

Leaflets giving a list of the lessons for 1948 and explaining the conditions upon which illustrations are accepted may be had from the Times for 15 cents a copy. $1 is paid for each illustration accepted, and $2 for the best one. Illustrations must reach the Times three months in advance of the lesson, and should not be clipped from earlier "Illustration Round Tables." Preference is given to illustrations on the printed lesson text. Because of the present paper shortage, readers are asked to limit the total submitted on each lesson to four illustrations.

No Difference.—*Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only* (Jas. 1:22, Golden Text). A missionary from China said that Wang, a Christian Chinese, was the means of leading many of his countrymen to Christ. The secret of his success was his holy life. The Chinese said of him, "There is no difference between him and the Book."—*From the S.S. Chronicle. Sent by Mrs. B. Dowen, Eastbourne, Sussex, Eng.*

Without the Bible.—*And they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses* (Neh. 8:1). A certain man dreamed that he went to consult his Bible and found every page blank. In amazement he rushed to his neighbor's house, aroused him from sleep, and asked to see his Bible; but they found it also blank. In great consternation they sought other Bibles, with the same result. Then they said, "We will go to the libraries and gather the quotations from books, and remake our Bible." But when they examined all the books, they found blank spaces where any Scripture quotations had been. When the man awoke, his brow was cold, yet covered with perspiration, so great had been his agony during the dream. Oh, how dark this world would be without the Bible!—*From the King's Business. Sent by Albert Mygatt, David City, Nebr.*

Hunger for the Word.—*The ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law* (Neh. 8:3). In the dawn of the English Reformation, when the great Bible, just translated, stood on its desk chained to a pillar in the cathedral, the people gathered in throngs, and, standing on the stone floor, listened attentively, hour after hour, and if the reader paused would cry out, "Read on! Read on!"—*From Bible Readings. Sent by L. G. James, Toronto, Can.*

Stopping the Leaks.—*And the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law* (Neh. 8:3). "A wooden bucket may, for want of use and by standing dry, be so full of slits and rifts that all the water you put into it runs out; yet the oftener you dip it into the well or pour the water into it, the sooner it is moistened and made to hold the water by the cracks being filled." This is like faulty memories with the Scriptures. All you read seems to run out. You can scarcely remember anything. Persevere! take in the living water; the old dry boards will get soaked and, as they do, the leaks will get smaller until you will be surprised how much you have retained.—*From "Choice Gleanings Calendar." Sent by Grace Robinson, Topeka, Kans. Prize illustration.*

Reverence for the Word.—*And Ezra opened the book . . . and when he opened it, all the people stood up* (Neh. 8:5). Several Sundays each summer for a number of years it was my privilege to minister to the congregation of the First Baptist Church of New York, of which that great champion of the faith, Dr. I. M. Haldeman, was the pastor. Whenever I began to read the Scriptures, the congregation rose, and every one opened his Bible and read with me. In that church the Bible is reverenced as God's own Word in the same way as the book of the Law was regarded as the Word of Jehovah by Ezra's great congregation. —*From Dr. P. W. Philpott, in Moody*

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Church News. Sent by Albert Mygatt, David City, Nebr.

The Power of the Scriptures.—*So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense* (Neh. 8:8). A few years ago a friend of the writer's attended a meeting in a Gospel mission on Sunday night. The leader asked a gentleman named Dr. Saul to read the Scripture and give a message as the Spirit might direct. Dr. Saul quietly arose, and in a rich, mellow voice read the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15. He made no comment whatever, but put the whole force of his eloquence into the reading. With insight into the love of the Father's heart, he read with such power and pathos that many were melted to tears. Then an opportunity was given for prodigals to return to God, and in a few minutes the space about the altar was filled with men seeking pardon and salvation.—*From the Illustrator. Sent by Albert Mygatt, David City, Nebr.*

Our Weakness Plus His Strength.—*Go your way, . . . the joy of the Lord is your strength* (Neh. 8:10). Mr. Townsend, general director of the Wycliffe Translators, tells how God inclined the hearts of government officials to help the young missionaries carry the Gospel to Indian tribes: "Eleven years ago," says Mr. Townsend, "when we appointed the first single girls to pioneer where it was 'a man's job,' and when an experienced missionary objected, saying that no missionary had ever gone to that dangerous area before, I turned to the girls in deep concern and said, 'Perhaps you had better not go.' I shall never forget the surprised expression on their faces as they replied with a question that put me on the spot, 'Won't God take care of us?' For me to have answered 'No' would have knocked the props out from our whole movement. We had nothing to stand on for the solution of all the impossible problems that lay ahead of us except God's miraculous power. I looked at the expression of wounded faith upon the faces of those young girls and replied: 'Yes, God will take care of you.' They went, and today the Mazateen Indians have the Word because Eunice Pike and Florence Hansen (now Mrs. George Cowan) dared to trust God."—*From The Sunday School Times. Sent by Howard G. Wilcox, Kearney, Nebr.*

This Week's Questions Answered

(The questions are on page 371)

1. To teach the Law (Ezra 7:10). Compare with the purposes of Zerubbabel and Nehemiah (Ezra 1 and Neh. 2:5).

2. The Lord's hand upon him. The phrase is repeated six times (Ezra 7:6, 9, 28; 8:18, 22, 31).

3. He had testified of God's protection, and would not annul that testimony by requesting an escort (Ezra 8:21-23).

4. Mixed marriages (Ezra 9:1, 2; see 2 Cor. 6:14-18).

5. Mixed marriages and Sabbath-breaking (Neh. 10:30, 31).

6. Nehemiah 8:8.

7. They stood to hear it (8:5).

8. With our ears (8:3); with our mind (8:2); with our heart, in a worshipful attitude (8:6).

9. Partly joy for the restoring of the privilege, partly grief for the sins which it discovered.

10. Gladness and feasting (Neh. 8:16-18).

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The Young People's Prayer Meeting

By John W. Lane, Jr.

Sunday, May 9

1. Parents As Youth See Them
(Eph. 6:1-4; Mal. 4:5, 6; Prov. 17:6)

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TWO topics, this week's and next week's, have been designed to deal with parent-youth relationships. This week we are to think particularly of youth's viewpoint, and discover, if possible, whether modern youth has the right idea concerning parents, and if

not, what is their proper attitude toward Father and Mother.

One does not have to read very far in the "question and answer" columns of our newspapers and periodicals, or listen to very many youth programs over the radio to realize that many young people have some very strange ideas as to what their parents ought to do and be. However, if we are to conduct this week's prayer meeting merely as a forum, then we shall have almost as many different views as there are persons present. The important thing to see is that God has set a standard in His Word for parent-youth relationships. Only when we turn to the Word, and submit to the teaching found there, have we hope of real or lasting improvement in these relationships.

It is worth while to note that one of the characteristics of those who have turned away from God, and refused to acknowledge Him and glorify Him as God is disobedience to parents (Rom. 1:30). At the heart of the breakdown in the home that is so evident all about us today is a turning away from God. By the same token, one of the greatest safeguards of right and happy relationships in the home life is a right relationship to God through faith in the Lord Jesus, and trust in Him as Saviour and Lord.

God Himself has designed the home and has planned that parents should have the care of and the jurisdiction and discipline over their children for their protection and training until such time as these children are able to come to maturity of judgment and experience, and thus be able to decide and act wisely for themselves.

During this period it is reasonable and right that obedience to parents must be required. Such obedience is in accord with God's plan and pleases Him (Col. 3:20; Eph. 6:1). It is necessary to efficient and harmonious operation of the home. We recognize this principle in business organization, in sports, and in the armed services, for if, in any one of these organizations, every individual did as he pleased, there would be chaos. Why is it, then, that so many young people cannot see that in the home it is necessary to have a head, who must have authority, and who must be obeyed, even though, at times, such obedience may seem to interfere with personal rights and individual likes and dislikes?

Obedience and discipline are necessary in the home also for the sake of the young person. None of us can be good leaders or directors of others until we have first learned to obey. The logical and best place to learn obedience

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is in the home among those who love us. If we do not choose to do so, we shall be compelled to learn it the hard way among others who have little regard for our feelings. Even when unreasonable or possibly unfair demands are made of us in the home, learning obedience has its value in our training, and if taken in the right spirit, will teach us to avoid unfairness when we come into the place of directing others.

One of youth's greatest difficulties in relationships to parents is the tendency to discount the value of experience. We are tempted sometimes to think that the times in which we live are so different from the days when Mother and Father were young that they simply do not understand and do not know our problems. Nothing can be farther from the truth. Human nature does not change, and Mother and Father have doubtless learned some difficult lessons, and had some heartaches from which they would like, if possible, to spare their children.

Even when we think their concern over us is unnecessary or too restricting, our loss will not be too serious, if we will go along with them and honestly try to heed their counsel and follow their advice. This is especially true if Mother and Father are earnest Christian believers, who are seeking to honor God and walk in His ways. God has promised to do well, and grant long life to those who are willing to honor their parents (Eph. 6:2, 3). What may seem to be a loss in good times for our own way at the moment will in a short while be seen to be of small importance, after all. If it should be that Mother and Father are mistaken about some particular thing they require of us, in a short while, if we are willing to be obedient, we shall have the opportunity to correct the situation. In most instances, we shall live to see the day when we shall be eternally grateful to Mother and Father because they interfered with our well-meant but rash intentions, and our unbalanced and immature judgment.

Let us learn to take any disagreements to the Lord Jesus. If there is a family altar in the home, this is one place where many disagreements can be resolved. But at least we can take them to our own personal prayer time, and lay them before the Lord with a willingness to let Him change our viewpoint if we are wrong, and, in any event, to work our relations with the other members of the family in a way that will be best for all concerned. Will you let Him counsel and direct you in these relationships?

PHILADELPHIA.

Please pray for the contributors and staff of The Sunday School Times, and for God's blessing on its contents.

"This Atomic Age and the Word of God"

(*Continued from page 369*)

Times military commentator, who gives a list and brief descriptions of some of the latest "pilotless power projectiles" developed by the Army and Navy. He also quotes Mr. Baldwin and others on the possibilities of "biological warfare," or attacks by the spreading of germs. Following his discussion of the prince of the air, Dr. Smith takes up such Scriptural phrases as "wars and rumors of wars," "in the caves and rocks of the mountains," "men's hearts failing them for fear," and the new meaning that the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah may have for us today. Many men of the world are emphasizing the need for "regeneration," and groping for means to bring it about. Two years ago President Truman went so far as to exclaim, "Oh, for an Isaiah or a St. Paul to reawaken a sick world to its moral responsibilities." Many prominent men feel that the time is short for living a normal life in this world.

The note of triumph that one would expect in such a book by Dr. Smith is found in his last chapter, "Victory in Christ." He stresses "the absolute preeminence and sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ," and the need for holding fast to the Bible in these perilous times. He holds out the "Blessed Hope" of the Lord's return as the hope of this world and every believer.

Christian people should be grateful to Dr. Wilbur Smith for the fine work he has done in explaining atomic power in language that the average reader can understand; in relating the events and inventions of the last three years to important Bible passages which give us some light on them; and for his challenge to remember that "we have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" (2 Pet. 1:19).

Children at Home

A Dependable Boy

By Perley R. Wade

BOB was a "fresh-air" boy. He was to stay for two weeks on the farm with Mr. and Mrs. Bailey, who owned it. How happy he was! He helped Mr. Bailey feed the chickens, he gathered the eggs, and he helped Mrs. Bailey churn the sweet-smelling yellow butter.

He helped drive the cows, even though he was a little afraid of them, and he was a little afraid of the big gray horse, although he tried not to show it. He loved the farm, and wished he could live there always.

One day he went with Mr. Bailey to help mend a big hole in the wire fence in the farthest pasture. As they went along, all at once Mr. Bailey caught his foot in a tangled mass of vines and roots, stumbled, and fell heavily. When he tried to get up he fell back on the ground. He sat there holding his leg.

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"I cannot take a step," he groaned; "how will I ever get home?"

"Perhaps you could walk if you leaned on me," suggested Bob, but Mr. Bailey shook his head.

"I think my leg is broken," he said. "Do you think you could go across the pasture to the white farmhouse and get Mr. Morrow to come and help me?"

Bob looked across the pastures to where the big white farmhouse stood on a little hill. It would not be easy for him. He would have to go through strange pastures where strange cows and horses were feeding, and jump across a little brook that ran through one of the pastures. But Mr. Bailey was hurt, and he had been so good to him that he must help him now.

"Yes, sir," he answered. "I will go."

How large the pastures seemed as he crossed them! He jumped over the brook, which was not so very wide after all. Now he was in the pasture where some cows were feeding, and his heart was in his throat as he walked along. Only one of the cows paid any attention to him, and she only raised her head to look at him, then she went on feeding, and then he was at the bars of the last pasture.

It did not take long to cross that, and he was in the Morrow farmyard. Mr. Morrow and his sons were working in front of the barn, and Bob hurried to them. He told his story in a few words, and Mr. Morrow and his sons hastily made a stretcher of some boards, and hurried back with Bob to where Mr. Bailey was waiting for them.

Putting him carefully on the stretcher, they carried him to his house and telephoned for the doctor, while Mrs. Bailey got the bed ready for him.

After the broken leg was set, and the doctor had gone, Mr. Bailey called Bob to him.

"I am proud of you, Bob," he said. "You showed you could be depended upon in an emergency, even if you were scared, as I know you were. Mrs. Bailey and I have been looking for a dependable boy to live on the farm with us, and call us Mother and Father. Do you think you would like to be that boy?"

Would he? Bob's eyes shone. To live on the farm always with two such kind people to call Mother and Dad!

So it was settled. Bob had no mother or father—just an uncle, who had a large family of his own and was glad for Bob to have such a nice home. Bob never forgot that he was there because he was dependable, and always he tried hard to live up to that reputation.

MELROSE, MASS.

Dr. Pettingill's Engagements

DR. WILLIAM L. PETTINGILL has accepted the invitation to become interim pastor of the First Baptist Church, 79th and Broadway, New York City, and began his ministry on April 1. He is therefore canceling all speaking engagements in other parts of the country for the remainder of this year. Communications should now be addressed to him at the church.

For Family Worship

By Ernest M. Wadsworth, D.D.

Daily Bible Readings on the International Lessons, issued by the International Sunday School Lesson Committee.

May 3 to 9

Mon.—Ezra 7:1, 6-10. Ezra the Teacher.

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS: "A ready scribe in the law of Moses." The secret of being able to teach God's Word effectively can be learned from the great Bible characters. "Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments." He used the Law lawfully. It was in his heart, and life, and upon his lips. By that same Law, which is our schoolmaster unto Christ, men still learn the nature, sinfulness, and punishment of sin. Law work is necessary in these lawless times. No man will flee to Calvary for pardon who does not hear the curse of the Law. *Pray for the Scandinavian Alliance Mission, 2839 McLean Ave., Chicago 47.*

Tues.—Nehemiah 8:1-6.
Ezra Reads the Law to the People.

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS: "And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding." The public reading of the Scriptures is very important. People who neglect the Bible in the home must get it therefore in church. The entrance of God's Word giveth light. By the Book of God men and women are warned; and it makes them wise unto salvation. Ezra's good example should be followed by every preacher. Let us remember, too, how our Lord opened the Book before the people. *Pray for the Russian Bible Correspondence School, 4542 W. Wrightwood, Chicago 39.*

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Wed.—Nehemiah 8:7, 8.
Reading the Bible Distinctly.

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS: "They read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense." Let us prayerfully practice reading God's Word distinctly as did the godly Levites of Nehemiah's time. It is important that God's people shall understand the Scriptures. Carelessness in public reading of the Word can lead people to misunderstand its meaning and importance. When God's Word moves our hearts it best instructs our tongues. Hearts which are affected by its inspiration will most likely aid its presentation. *Pray for the Multnomah School of the Bible, 632 N. E. Holladay, Portland 14, Oreg.*

Thurs.—Nehemiah 9:32-38.
A Public Confession of Sin.

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS: "We have done wickedly." When God's people are in common transgression there needs to be public confession. Nehemiah lists kings, princes, priests, fathers, and the whole nation in his confession and prayer. We, likewise, have done wickedly. More than any of us realize we have grieved God, injured His Church, weakened His cause, and permitted sinners to perish in their sins before our very eyes. The great need of the hour is humiliation and confession of sin before God. *Pray for the Christian Business Men's Committee, 10 S. La Salle St., Chicago 3.*

Fri.—Nehemiah 10:28-32.
"A Promise To Keep God's Laws."

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS: "They that had separated themselves from the people of the lands unto the law of God . . . clave to their brethren . . . and entered into an oath, to walk in God's law." These penitent people decided to go all the way with God in correcting their wrong practices. It is well to realize as they did that only sins abandoned are sins pardoned. We, too, need a cleansing, sin-removing revival. *Pray for the Gospel Mission, 810 5th St., N. W., Washington 1, D. C.*

Sat.—Nehemiah 13:10-14.
"Why Is the House of God Forsaken?"

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS: "The house of God forsaken?" People who do not support worship profane worship. The charge of forsaking the house of God lies against every person who refrains from sustaining public worship. This type of abandonment of God's cause is common. Many who say, "We have built a beautiful church," and have never given a worthy offering for it should drop "we" and supply "they." How many more seem willing to use the church than to aid it. *Pray for the Faith of Our Fathers Program, Box 1234, Springfield, Mo.*

Sun.—Psalm 119:9-16.
"I Will Not Forget Thy Word."

PRAYER SUGGESTIONS: "I will not forget thy word." Habits good and bad tend to persist. Form good habits of Bible reading, prayer, and witnessing, and you will find them hard to break. If you neglect them for a day, you will miss the benefit some way. Let first things be first in your life and other things will take their rightful place. If God be first you'll never thirst, for He satisfieth the longing soul. As cold water to a thirsty soul, so is God's Word to the inner man. *Pray for the Gordon College of Theology and Missions, 30 Evans Way, Boston 15.*

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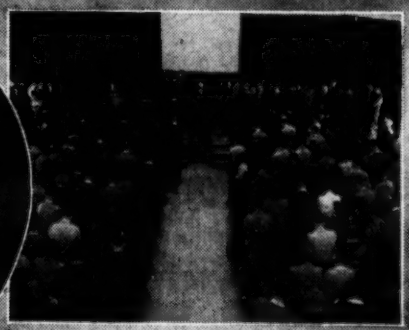

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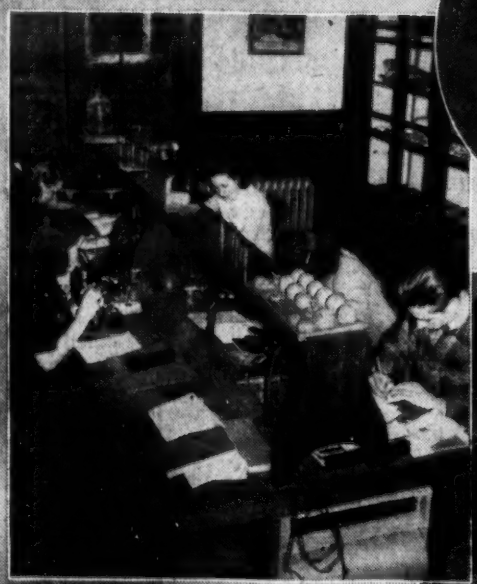

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